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August 2, 2007

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES
MEETING AS A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The Committee on Youth Services held a meeting on August 2, 2007, as a Committee of the Whole, with Chairman John Connolly presiding and Committee Members Aldermen Maryann Heuston, Walter Pero, Dennis Sullivan, Thomas Taylor, Robert Trane and William White also present and voting. Also present were Police Chief Robert Bradley, Health Director Noreen Burke, Aru Manrique from Multi-Cultural Affairs, Jessica Collins from the Cambridge Health Alliance and several interested individuals.

Ms. Collins presented a comprehensive report on the well-being of Somerville youth and explained how the report was compiled. She presented data on sexual behavior, violence prevention, physical activity and nutrition, substance abuse and mental health. The report also included a demographic look at Somerville's youth population as well as statistics on several areas affecting the city's youth. The rationale, community strengths and assets and recommendations were presented for each of the categories discussed.

Among the statistics mentioned were:

- A 16% decrease in teen birth rates
- 25.8% of Somerville High School students are experiencing emotional abuse
- females are reporting a doubling of sexual comments and or harassment
- a decrease in the number of Somerville students who were threatened or injured with a weapon
- an increase in the number of students at risk due to being overweight
- 40% of middle school students are trying alcohol
- alcohol usage by high school students is decreasing

Alderman Pero expressed concern that representatives from the Mayor's Office and from Youth Services were not available for this presentation and he asked that his concern be conveyed to the Administration.

No papers were acted on.

Alderman John Connolly, Chairman
Committee on Youth Services

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Committee on Youth Services,
August 2, 2007

In Board of Aldermen

Clerk